

Storytelling

Storytelling can be an effective way to put a “face” on public health, making public health activities, and in turn your organization, tangible to the community. Storytelling is using personal stories of those people positively affected by public health to talk about what you do as an organization.

How to collect stories

Sometimes people will send letters to your organization, or call your main phone line to share a positive experience they have had. You will want to make sure to keep track of these stories, and check with the person to see if you can use their story to promote public health. Some people will be more than happy to let you use their story, while others might be somewhat unsure. Offer to use the story anonymously for those who it would be sensitive to share (for example: a restaurant that got a bad inspection, but you worked with them to correct the problem might be willing to share their story, but not identifying information about themselves to protect their business). For additional stories, talk with various members of your organization who work with members of the public on a regular basis for potential testimonial ideas, and then work with them to obtain the story.

How to use stories

Once storytelling testimonials have been obtained, they can be used in a variety of ways. Below are a few suggestions of how to use storytelling for your organization, but the possibilities for story uses is endless:

- As examples in brochures, fact sheets, etc.
- In press releases to emphasize the topic.
- Public service announcements (PSA) and advertising
- When talking to public officials about the importance of public health